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ABSTRACT

This packet, written for teachers of sixth-grade art and language arts courses, is designed to inspire creative expression in words and images through an appreciation for Japanese art. The selection of paintings presented are from the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution. The interdisciplinary approach, combines art and language arts. Lessons may be presented independently or together as a unit. Six images of art are provided as prints, slides, and in black and white photographic reproductions. Handouts for student use and a teacher's lesson guide also are included. Lessons begin with an anticipatory set designed to help students begin thinking about issues that will be discussed. A motivational activity, a development section, closure, and follow-up activities are given for each lesson. Background information is provided at the end of each lesson. The three lessons are: (1) "Learning from Paintings: Is a Picture Worth a Thousand Words?"; (2) "Making Paintings: Pictures and Writing"; and (3) "Reading Paintings: Painting Stories." Lists of recommended books and resources conclude the materials. (MM)

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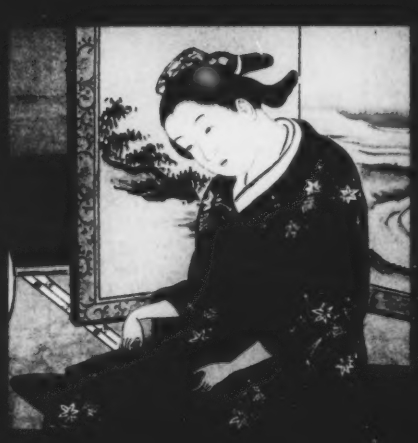
ED 391 771

JAPAN

Images and Words



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JAPAN
Images and Words

An Interdisciplinary Unit
for Sixth-Grade Art
and Language Arts Classes

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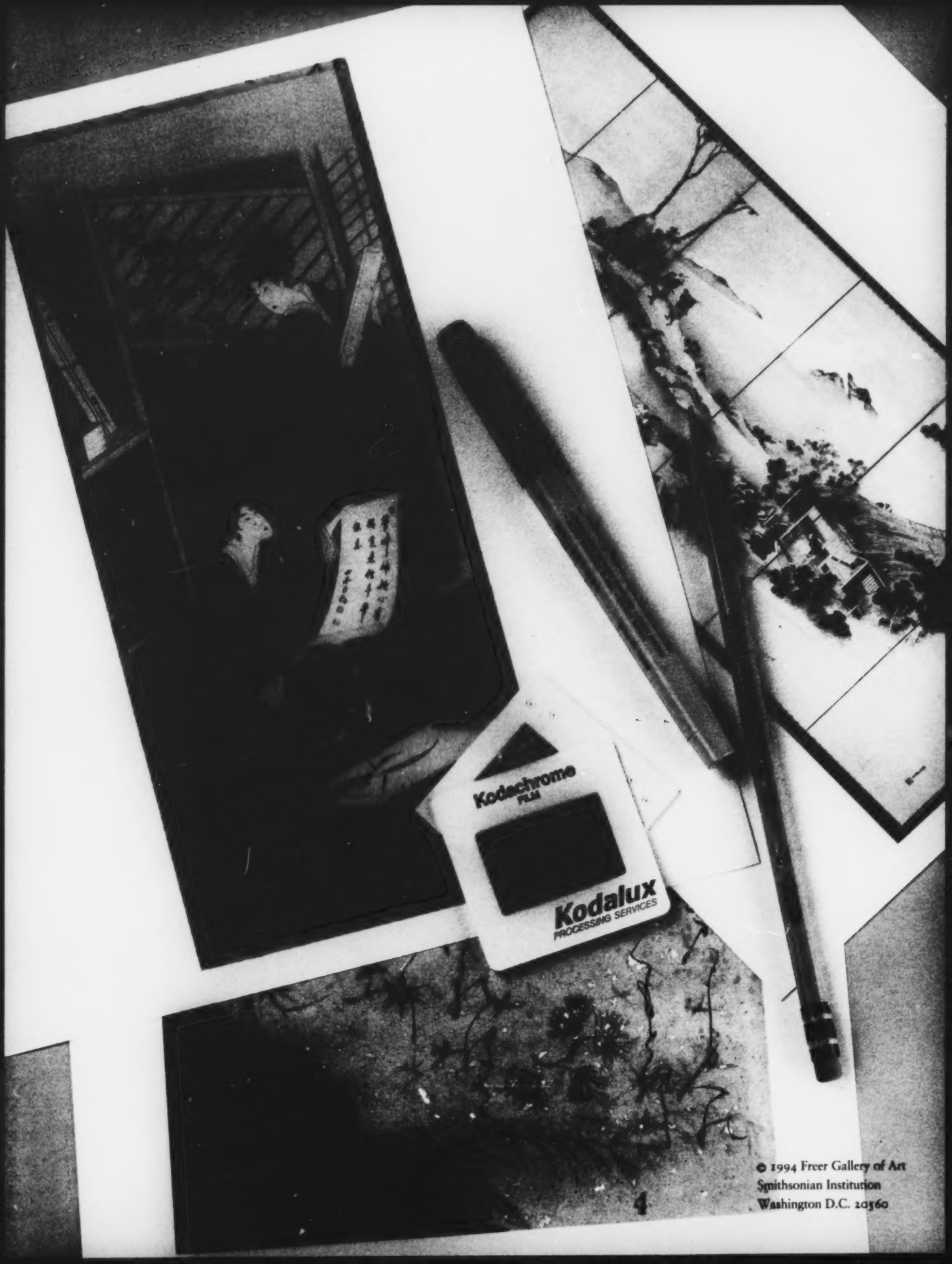

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INTRODUCTION

This packet, written for teachers of sixth-grade art and language arts courses, is designed to inspire creative expression in words and images through an appreciation for Japanese art. The materials will also introduce students to Japanese painting through works from the outstanding Japanese collection of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution. Written with an interdisciplinary approach, the packet's components may be used as separate lessons or together as a unit. The three lessons use cooperative learning techniques, develop thinking skills, and may be taught by one teacher or a team.

Lesson Format

Following the work of Madeline Hunter, most of the lessons begin with an anticipatory set, usually a sketchbook or journal activity. These exercises are designed to help students begin thinking about issues that will be discussed in the lesson and to promote the interconnectedness between language and art development. The activity also gives the teacher a few minutes for record keeping. Next is a motivational activity in which the topic of the lesson is introduced and questions are posed to stimulate creative thinking. These ideas are built upon in the development section. Closure and follow-up activities synthesize the ideas presented in the lesson. Handouts may be photocopied for classroom use. Follow-up activities include suggestions for both art and language arts projects. Techniques for evaluating student participation in and understanding of the lesson are noted under the heading evaluation. Background information is provided at the end of each lesson.

The number of days suggested for each lesson are estimated on the basis of forty-five-minute periods.

All of the lessons have been tested with sixth-grade classes in Howard County, Maryland.

Materials in Packet

Six images of works of art from the Freer Gallery of Art are included. Each image is reproduced as a print, a slide, and a black-and-white photograph.

The prints may be displayed on a bulletin board and will serve as a reminder of the themes and issues of the unit. The slides are useful when discussing an image with the entire class, as the projected image is large and will help focus attention on particular details. The photographs may be photocopied and distributed to students for use in small groups.

A list of the images included in the packet is provided on page 61, along with order information for additional slides and prints.

This packet also includes handouts for use in class or as homework, which may be photocopied for classroom use. Refer to the table of contents for page numbers.

GETTING STARTED

Before beginning the unit, determine what the students already know or believe about Japan. Circle of Knowledge, a brainstorming activity, helps encourage discussion. Divide the class into small groups, giving each group a marker and a sheet of paper with "Japan" written in the middle. Have the students write as much as they know about Japan in five minutes. The rules are: **1**. Each person will write one fact about Japan and pass the marker to the next student, who will write another fact and so on. **2**. If a student cannot think of something to write, the other students may make suggestions, but the student whose turn it is must do the writing. **3**. The object is to write as many facts as possible about Japan within the time limit. If needed, the teacher may call on each group to give an example aloud to help the students get started. Have students share some or all of their answers orally. The teacher may wish to post the lists. As the students do the lessons within the unit, they may decide to cross out incorrect statements or add what they have learned.

LESSON 1 | *Learning from Paintings: Is a Picture Worth a Thousand Words?*

one day

OVERVIEW

Just as a detective's hunting for clues can solve a mystery, so a student's careful observation of a work of art can provide valuable insights into the culture in which it was created. Students will be introduced to the "detective work" involved in learning from paintings. And, like detectives, students must recognize that to get a true picture of a society they must gather information from more than one source.

Activities

Working in small groups, using guided looking strategies, students will examine paintings for clues about daily life in the United States and Japan. This lesson will help students learn to recognize the power of art to communicate across time and cultural differences. However, students will also be asked to analyze the works of art as accurate sources of information. Using critical thinking skills, students will begin to identify problems inherent in relying on information gained from a single source.

Objectives

Given slides and photocopies of works of art, the students will:

- interpret the paintings to draw inferences about the environment, lifestyle, and time period depicted.
- evaluate paintings as sources of information.

Materials

slide projector, slide 1, slide 2, photograph 2, one photocopy of photograph 2 for each student, chalk and chalk board or overhead projector and marker, one worksheet per group

DIRECTIONS

MATERIALS
slide projector, slide 1

Anticipatory Set

■ Display slide 1. Do not reveal the title of the image.

SKETCHBOOK/JOURNAL EXERCISE
Detectives solve mysteries by carefully looking for clues. In your journal write or sketch ten things you see in the painting that might give you a clue about where the place in this picture is and when the picture was painted.

Motivation

■ Ask students to share their discoveries with the class. ■ List the observations on the board/overhead. ■ Consider using the following questions to promote discussion.

What types of land and water forms (mountains, valleys, rivers, etc.) do you see?

There is a relatively flat road. No water is visible.

What types of plants or trees do you recognize if any?

The leaves on the trees are turning color. The trees must be deciduous.

Can you tell what season it is?

It is autumn.

What types of buildings (houses, barns, shops, etc.) do you see?

A large church and a few small houses are in the picture.

What materials do you think were used for construction of the buildings?

Brick, wood, and plaster were used.

Describe the windows and doors that you see.

The windows are shuttered; the doors are hard to see. We can make an assumption based on our own experiences that the doors are wooden.

For what types of weather would this construction be best suited?

This type of construction would keep the elements out whether it was cold, wet, or sunny.

Describe the clothing the people are wearing.

People are shown wearing long skirts and bonnets. They may be wearing boots, but it is hard to tell.

For what types of weather would the clothing be suitable?

This layered clothing would be suitable for cool weather.

What activities are the people doing in the picture?

People are shown walking along the street. The children may be going to school; it looks as if they are carrying books.

Do you think they are working or playing ?

It is hard to say.

Do you think this painting shows a scene today or in the past? Why?

A scene from the past, because of the clothing.

What do you know about this place from what you observed? Can you tell where this place is?

Students should be able to recognize autumn foliage and may know that this coloring occurs in only certain places. They may recognize New England-style architecture.

The painting is titled *October Morning—Deerfield, Massachusetts.* It is dated 1917. How much of this information were you able to deduce from looking at the painting?

Get students' opinions.

Now that you know the place is in Massachusetts let's delve further into the painting. Why do people in Massachusetts use brick and wood for their buildings?

Wood and materials to make bricks are readily available in the region. The winters are cold so homes must be sturdily built. Point out that this is an adaptation to the climate.

What do you think the artist, Willard Metcalf, was trying to tell you about the place that he chose to depict?

Deerfield is a pleasant place to live; the houses look well built and the people seem happy.

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MATERIALS
slide projector, slide 2, photocopies of photograph 2, worksheet: *Country Scenes*, chalk and chalkboard or overhead and marker

Development

■ Divide the class into small groups. ■ Give each group a photocopy and a worksheet. ■ Display slide 2. Ask students to complete the worksheet. ■ Circulate to check students' progress. ■ Call time, and have each group report their findings to the class. ■ Refer to the information for teachers on page 11 to clarify what is happening in the scene. Be sure to point out that the painting was created in the nineteenth century. Explain that the artist has given us some clues about the season, autumn—the house is being rethatched, chestnuts are ripe, and the millstone is being readied to grind newly harvested rice. ■ Record the information on the board or overhead. ■ After all the groups have reported, ask the students to refer to the notes to answer these questions:

What do we know about the geography, climate, and vegetation of Japan?

There are volcanic mountains and water. The people grow rice. Pine trees and flowering trees grow in Japan.

How are Japanese houses different from houses in Massachusetts?

They are made of wood and have thatched roofs. They are raised up on stilts and are open to the air. Japanese houses have minimal furniture.

What do we know about the Japanese people from looking at this picture?

The way they dress and that they farm.

Closure

How were you able to learn about Japan by looking at the painting?

By looking for clues in the painting about geography, climate, vegetation, and house and clothing styles.

What were you able to learn about Massachusetts from looking at *October Morning?*

The season, the style of buildings, the dress are all shown in the painting.

What do you know about Massachusetts that is not included in the painting?

Students may have information about Massachusetts today, its history, its big cities, its universities, its politics, its football teams.

What do you know about Japan that is not included in the painting?

Students may know something about Japan today, its history, its big cities, its universities, its politics, its industries.

Is looking at paintings a good way to learn about another culture or another time period? Why? or why not?

Paintings provide us with a good deal of information. However, they show only a single moment in time, in a particular place. In addition, they may express just one point of view—that of the artist. Also, we may misinterpret what we see.

What more about Japan or the paintings would you like to know?

Students may want to know "How do Japanese people dress today?" or "What do Japanese people eat?"

Where would you look for the information?

Students may do research in the library or media center, at a local museum, or at the Freer Gallery of Art.

Follow-up Activities

Art

You have been commissioned by your principal to create a picture of a scene in your school to be sent to a school in Japan to show what your school is like. Include clues about the building, the people in your school, what you wear to school, the climate, the terrain, and the vegetation. If there are aspects about your school life you are unable to convey in the picture, write them on the back of your painting.

Language Arts

There are clues to the story behind every picture, which a skillful detective can uncover. Chose either *October Morning* or *Country Scenes* and write a story inspired by the clues you discovered. Describe what is happening in the picture. What are the people doing? What are they saying? Where are they going? Do some research in the media center or library to check your facts.

Evaluation

worksheets from the groups, group responses, individual written responses, follow-up projects

14 WORKSHEET: *Country Scenes*

Name Date

List ten things you see in this picture.

What types of land and water forms (mountains, valleys, rivers) do you see?

What types of plants or trees do you recognize?

Can you tell what season of the year it is? If so, what season is it?

What types of buildings (houses, barns, shops) do you see?

What materials do you think were used for construction of the buildings?

Describe the windows and doors that you see.

For what types of weather would this construction be best suited?

What do you notice about the furniture in the picture?

Describe the clothing the people are wearing.

For what types of weather would the clothing be suitable?

What activities are the people doing in the picture?

Do you think they are working or playing?

Do you think this painting shows Japan today or in the past? Why?

Based on your observation of this picture, what do you know about Japan's geography? climate?

Is there anything that you see that surprises you?

If so, what?

Is there anything you cannot identify?

If so, describe where it is in the picture.

Is there anything in the picture about which you would like to know more?

How could you find out more information?

LESSON 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Geography

Japan is a crescent-shaped archipelago of four large and more than 1000 small islands. The large islands are Hokkaido, the northernmost; Honshu, the largest; Shikoku; and Kyushu. The combined area of the islands is about 145,000 square miles, which is larger than the state of California or the country of Italy. If it were superimposed over the East Coast of the United States, the group of islands would cover a space from Maine to Florida.

Japan is bordered on the north by the Sea of Okhotsk, on the east by the Pacific Ocean, and on the west by the Tsushima Strait, the Sea of Japan, and the East China Sea. No part of Japan is more than one hundred miles from the sea. Most of the land is mountainous, leaving only the coastal areas for large cities, industrial development, and farming.

Because of Japan's location in an unstable area of the earth's crust, earthquakes and earth tremors occur there frequently. Undersea quakes can cause destructive tidal waves called *tsunami.* Some volcanic mountains are still active and there are many hot springs, which are used for recreational and medicinal purposes.

Climate

Just as the climate from Maine to Florida varies, so does the climate vary from the northernmost to the southernmost islands of Japan. Most of Japan has four seasons: winter, December to February, with heavy snow only on Hokkaido and Honshu; spring, March to May; summer, June to September, hot and humid; fall, October to November. Much rain falls during the spring, summer, and fall. The rain starts first in the south and moves north during June and July, and destructive tropical storms, called typhoons, occur in September and October.

Vegetation

Because of the hot, humid summers there, more than 17,000 varieties of plants grow in Japan. A wide variety of trees thrive in Japan, including broad leafed evergreens like camellia, deciduous beech and oak, and conifers. Bamboo grows on Honshu and on the islands to the south. Many flowering plants are cultivated. Azaleas and tree peonies bloom in April and May respectively; the lotus in August; the chrysanthemum, (Japan's national flower) blooms in November; and the plum in February.

Sea of Okhotsk
Sea of Japan
JAPAN
East China Sea
Pacific Ocean
Okinawa
RYUKYU ISLANDS

Rice Growing and Processing

Rice cultivation was introduced to Japan from other Asian countries by the fifth century B.C. Today, almost half of the cultivated land in Japan is devoted to growing rice. The climate in most areas of Japan allows for one crop of rice per year.

Long ago the Japanese believed the rice plant was a gift from the gods. For hundreds of years the difficult work was done by hand, but now much is done by machine. However, the number of hours of labor per acre is still very high, about 330 hours per acre in 1975. This is about 40 times the amount of hours of labor needed per acre for the production of corn in the United States. Rice seeds are started in small plots of dry land, but the plants need to grow in shallow water, so low walls are built around a field, called a paddy. The field is artificially flooded by pipes that bring water from a nearby river. After three or four weeks, the young plants are transplanted to the paddy. The fruit, a grain, is produced at the top of the stalk. When the rice is ripe, it resembles the oat plant and is golden yellow. The paddy must be drained to allow harvest. The stalks are cut, tied in bundles, and hung up to dry. When the bundles are dry, the rice must be threshed (beaten) and winnowed (tossed in the air) to separate the grain, the part that is eaten, from the outer brown husk. The grain is then stored in bags. Rice is Japan's staple food, and its straw is used to make hats, sandals, floor mats *(tatami)*, wine *(sake)*, and to feed livestock. Huge ropes made of rice straw are used to decorate entrances to Shinto shrines.

Architecture and Furniture

Japanese architecture emphasizes the use of natural materials and a combining of interior and exterior space through the use of sliding screens as doors and windows. Gardens are a part of the design of most buildings. The design of stilt-raised buildings originated from the style of architecture used in ancient granaries. Steep roofs with wide eaves were designed to shed heavy rains. The multistoried towers, called pagodas, developed from the finial decorations found on the tops of Indian stupas, mound-shaped structures built to house religious relics, usually related to Buddha.

Although now there are high-rise apartments in Japan, traditional Japanese houses have only one or two stories and no basement. Space is used to the fullest; often the same room is used as a living room, dining

room, and bedroom. Instead of solid walls, sliding paper screens, called *fusuma,* and folding screens, called *byobu,* separate the area into rooms, if needed. The floors are covered with rice-straw mats, called *tatami. Tatami* are a standard size; six feet long, three feet wide, and two inches thick. As a result, rooms are measured by the number of mats, not in feet and inches. Standard rooms measure eight, six, or four-and-a-half mats. A bed, called a *futon,* consists of two mattresses that can be folded up and stored during the day. A low table and cushions are used for dining, but can be pushed aside when the family is not eating.

Most homes contain a *tokonoma,* a niche where artwork and/or a flower arrangement is displayed. The display is changed seasonally or more often.

Clothing

Today most Japanese wear Western-style clothing, but the traditional kimono is still worn for special occasions. The kimono is a floor-length robe held together by a sash at the waist. Men's sashes are narrow, women's sashes, called *obi,* are wide. For formal occasions, men wear kimono in dark shades and women wear very colorful and beautifully embroidered kimono. Men sometimes wear wide-legged trousers called *hakama* under a short kimono. The most formal kimono are black with white, miniature family crests: one on the back, one on each of the sleeves, and one on each side of the chest. The crest designs are usually circular or square and are derived from flowers, plants, birds, animals, and many other subjects.

A light cotton kimono, called *yukata,* is worn in the summer; in winter a warm woolen kimono is worn. Special socks *(tabi),* which are divided between the big toe and the rest of the toes, are worn on the feet, and the thong-type sandals, which are worn over the socks, can be worn on either foot.

LESSON 2 | *Making Paintings: Pictures and Writing*

two days

OVERVIEW

In the West, a distinction is made between painting and writing; in Japan, the two forms of artistic expression are often combined. Calligraphy, the art of beautiful writing, is appreciated as much as, if not more than, figurative imagery. Students will explore the role of pictures and writing in the paintings displayed in this lesson.

Activities

DAY 1

Through careful observation of works of art, students will identify the different formats and uses of the two types of scrolls. Using Venn diagrams, students will work in groups to analyze the similarities and differences among Japanese paintings, Western paintings, and Western books.

MATERIALS

slide projector, slide 3, slide 4, paper rolled into a scroll, Venn diagrams, one dictionary for each student, chalk and chalkboard or marker and overhead projector

DAY 2

Students will use research skills to define words to be used in the lesson. They will be introduced to the notion of calligraphy as an art form. Working independently, students will synthesize the information they have learned about Japanese paintings and calligraphy to create their own calligraphic painting.

MATERIALS

slide projector, slide 5, slide 3, newsprint paper, brushes, paint, water, newspapers, chalk and chalkboard or marker and overhead projector

DAY 1
DIRECTIONS

Objectives

Given slides showing Japanese artists at work, the students will: ■ recognize the two main formats for Japanese paintings. ■ compare and contrast Japanese scrolls with Western framed paintings and books.

Anticipatory Set

SKETCHBOOK/JOURNAL EXERCISE

■ Ask each student to find the dictionary definitions of two of the following words: calligraphy, painting, picture, scroll, work of art, writing.

■ Ask for volunteers to read their definitions to the class.

Motivation

■ Encouraging the students to use the definitions they have found, discuss the following questions:

What is a picture?

A two-dimensional image.

What might a picture be of?

A person, a place, a thing, or an abstract idea.

What is a painting?

A picture created in paint or ink.

What equipment do you need to create a painting?

Paint, ink, paper or canvas, easel, palette, brushes, palette knives, frame.

How do you know whether a painting is finished?

It is signed and framed.

How do you display a painting?

Hang it on the wall.

Development

MATERIALS
slide projector, slide 3

Class discussion

■ Display slide 3

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Can you describe what is happening in this scene?

A boy is painting a picture of an orchid plant. Beside him are tools used in Japanese painting: brushes in a brush pot, paper, a bowl of water, an ink stone and ink stick for making ink, a box for painting equipment. Behind him an older girl unrolls a sheet of calligraphy. To the right of the girl, a standing woman holds a roll of paper in her hand. Behind the group is an open window through which a flowering tree can be seen.

Can you tell what the boy is painting?

An orchid plant.

What equipment is the boy using to create the painting?

Brushes in a brush pot, paper, a bowl of water, an ink stone and ink stick, a box.

What kind of painting is the girl holding?

Calligraphy. It says: "In my dream a divine inspiration came to me. When I awoke and took up my brush it evaporated."

Can you tell if the boy's painting is finished?

He is still in the process of painting. A finished painting usually includes an artist's seal and signature. Notice the seal (the square, red design) and signature (the calligraphy) on the bottom left of the slide. These tell us the painting was done by Utagawa Toyohiro.

Can you tell if the girl's painting is finished?

It is; it has a seal and signature on the bottom left, and an additional seal on the top right. Japanese is written from right to left beginning at the top of the page and working down.

What do you notice about the shape of the paper?

It is much longer than a 8 1/2" x 11" piece of paper.

How do you think the paintings will be displayed?

The paintings will be bordered with silk and mounted on rollers. They will be hung on the wall for special occasions. When they are not on display they will be rolled up for storage.

Is there anything in your own home that you view in a similar way; something you hang on the wall?

A framed painting, a poster, or photograph.

MATERIALS
paper rolled as a scroll

■ Use your homemade scroll. ■ Unroll the scroll to demonstrate the way the hanging scroll is used.

MATERIALS
slide projector, slide 4

■ Display slide 4

Can you describe what is happening in this scene?

A woman is reading some writing.

Do you think she is the author? Why or why not?

No, there is no painting equipment shown in the picture.

What kind of painting is the young woman holding?

Calligraphy. It is a letter written to the woman, a new bride, telling her to treat her mother-in-law as her own parent.

What do you notice about the shape of the paper?

It is much wider than a 8 1/2" x 11" piece of paper.

■ Use your homemade scroll. ■ Unroll the scroll to show students how the hanging scroll is used.

How do you think the handscroll will be displayed?

The painting will be bordered with silk and rolled up for storage. It will not be hung on the wall, rather it will be viewed by one person, or perhaps a small group of friends.

Is there anything in your home that you view in a similar way, something you don't put out on display but would look at by yourself or with a small group of friends?

Books, photo albums, baseball cards.

If Japanese writing is read from right to left, from which end of the scroll would you begin to read?

The right, as the young woman in the painting is.

If poetry and stories can be written on handscrolls, what items in your home are similar to handscrolls?

Books.

MATERIALS
Venn diagrams

■ Divide the students into small groups and give one Venn diagram to each group. Ask the groups to discuss and complete the diagrams to show the similarities and differences between one of the following pairs: 1. handscrolls and books 2. handscrolls and framed paintings 3. hanging scrolls and books 4. hanging scrolls and framed paintings. ■ Ask students to consider similarities and differences in: size, weight, portability, ease of storage, and number of viewers possible at a time. ■ Have one representative from each group report their findings to the class while another group member lists the points on the board.

Closure

■ Collect the diagrams from each group. ■ Review the similarities and differences among books, handscrolls, hanging scrolls, and framed paintings. ■ Announce that students will try their hands at making a calligraphic scroll at the next lesson.

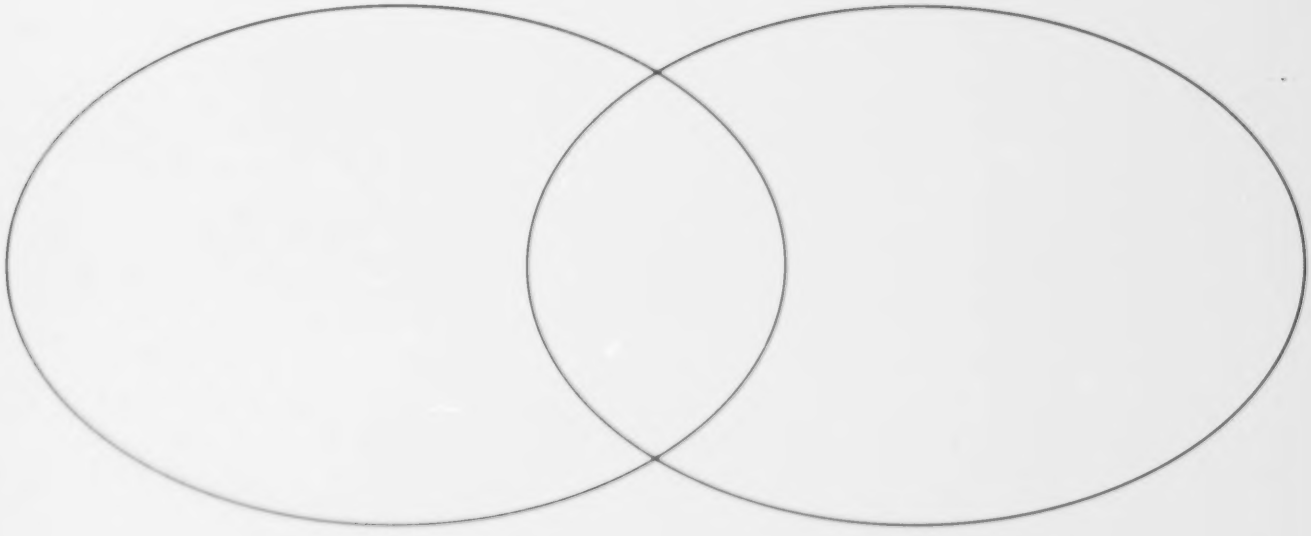
Follow-up Activity

Japanese calligraphy, day 2

Evaluation

class discussion, Venn diagrams, group presentations

WORKSHEET
Venn Diagram



DAY 2
DIRECTIONS

Objectives

Having seen and analyzed slides showing Japanese calligraphy, the students will: ■ recognize the qualities that make writing a form of art. ■ create various brushstrokes that combine to make calligraphic characters. ■ make their own calligraphic scrolls.

Anticipatory Set

SKETCHBOOK/JOURNAL EXERCISE

Write your name five different ways in your journal using the fanciest, most beautiful, and most unusual style you can. Then sign your name with your usual signature.

Motivation

Discuss the following questions:

What kinds of things are signed?

Letters, official documents, checks, paintings.

Why are they signed?

To officially acknowledge who made them.

Do you consider what you wrote in your journal a work of art? Why or why not?

In many cultures calligraphy, beautiful writing, is regarded as art. It may be hung on the walls of people's homes or in museums.

Do you have any special calligraphy at home?

Poems, official awards, wedding invitations, prayers.

Development

Class discussion

MATERIALS
slide projector, slide 5

■ Display slide 5

Where would you begin to read this calligraphy?

You would begin at the top right-hand corner and read from top to bottom, right to left.

What do you think this calligraphy might be about? Be prepared to justify your answer.

Poetry; there are two poems. The first poem reads:

One whom I met
Until yesterday
Is gone today,
Swept away
Like mountain clouds

Who do you think has gone away?

A friend.

Why do you think the poet describes the friend as being "swept away like mountain clouds."

Mountain clouds disappear leaving no sign behind them. The poet mourns his friend who has disappeared without trace. This is a poem about death although it is not specifically stated.

How would you describe the paper on which the calligraphy is written?

The paper is of outstanding quality. It is made of three pieces of paper assembled into a collage. The paper is decorated with flecks of mica and delicate silver motifs of insects, grasses, and leaves.

Do you think that the paper matches the mood of the poem?

Like the clouds, insects, grasses, and leaves are integral parts of our environment. Yet they can be there one minute and gone the next. They all remind us that life constantly changes and that ultimately we will die.

MATERIALS
Slide 3

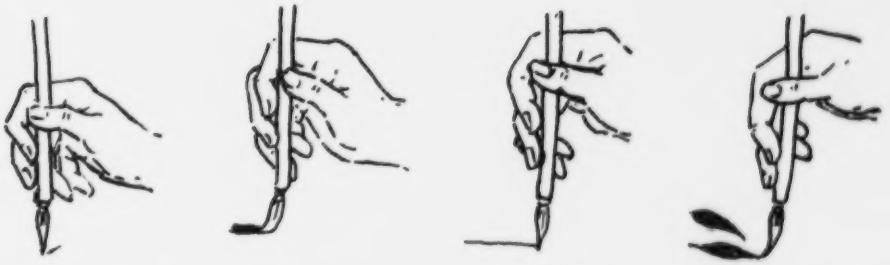
■ Display slide 3

What do you notice about the position of the artist and his paper?

He is sitting on the floor holding the brush perpendicular to the paper. There is something under his paper to protect the floor and a weight on the top of his paper to keep the paper from curling.

Development

Individual art project



Hold the brush upright.

Press hard for a wide stroke.

Lift up for a thin stroke.

Use one stroke per shape.

■ Ask students to move the desks and sit on the floor in the position in which the boy is sitting. ■ Distribute newspapers, paper, and brushes. ■ Show students how wide lines are made by pushing down on the brush and thin lines are made by lifting the brush and using less pressure. Have students practice without ink. ■ Distribute the ink. ■ Have students practice writing their names a few times, beginning on the right side of the page at the top of the paper and moving down.

Closure

■ Ask students to show what they have painted and to talk about what was easy or difficult about the experience.

Follow-up Activity

■ Distribute another piece of paper to each student.

A friend of yours sent you the following poem:

One whom I met
Until yesterday
Is gone today,
Swept away
Like mountain clouds

You want to send a scroll to your friend in response. Will you create a picture of nature, a poem in calligraphy, or will you combine painting and calligraphy? Will your scroll be a handscroll or a hanging scroll?

Evaluation

class discussion, calligraphy, individual art project

LESSON 2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Calligraphy

Calligraphy, called *shodo* in Japanese, means beautiful writing and may be applied to individual characters or to entire documents. In many Asian countries calligraphy is done with a brush and is highly valued as an art form. The Japanese first learned the art from the Chinese, but they challenged all the rules of spacing, ink tone, character form, and line width, creating their own unique style.

(above) Detail from *The Four Accomplishments*

(right) Detail from *Girl Preparing Ink*. Handscroll by Nishikawa Sukenobu (Japanese, 1671–1751). Color, black, and gold on silk. Museum accession number 99.19.
35 cm H x 65.7 cm W
(13 7/16" x 25 7/8")

The Chinese have long referred to the ink stick, ink stone, brush, and paper as the Four Treasures of the Scholar's Studio. Japanese scholars, calligraphers, and painters regard them as indispensable tools for their work, also. The high quality of the Four Treasures is of the utmost importance, for who would want to use a brush that dropped hairs or paper that does not absorb ink?

Brushes

Asian brushes are constructed differently from Western ones. The classical Japanese brush, called *fude* (foo-day), is composed of three major sections. The hairs in a Western brush fit into a metal clamp, or ferrule,

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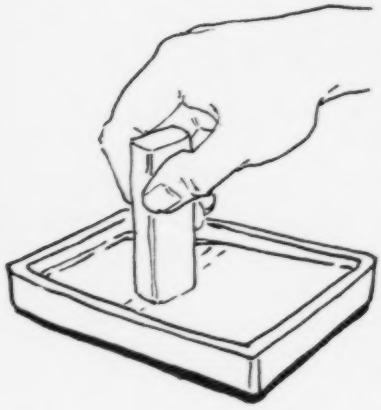
which holds them in place. The hairs of an Asian brush are held together with adhesive and are inserted into a hollow bamboo tube. The innermost section is a long core of hair; surrounding this core, the middle section is made up of layers of shorter hair; the outer section is made of one or more layers of hair that reaches from base to tip, swelling around the shorter hairs of the middle section and coming to a point. The space between the inner and outermost layers, created by the shorter hair of the middle section, acts as a reservoir where water-based ink or pigments naturally accumulate. Asian brushes are made of the hair and bristles of animals, such as rabbit, badger, weasel, hare, wolf, deer, horse, goat, pig, and sheep. As a result, each brush has a slightly different quality.

Ink

In Japanese, ink is called *sumi. Sumi-e* means ink painting. Traditionally, the ink used for calligraphy and painting is made by rubbing or grinding a solid ink stick or cake with water on an ink stone, which is a fine-grained slab of stone with a raised flat area for rubbing and a depressed reservoir for ink. To make the ink sticks, the sooty carbon produced by burning pine is collected, mixed with a solution of animal glue, pressed into molds, and dried. Ink sticks are often molded into rectangular or round shapes, and they may be decorated with designs of dragons, landscapes, auspicious beings, and gilded inscriptions.



Ink is prepared just before the artist begins to paint. The quantity of water used, which affects the consistency and shade of the ink, is important and requires judgment and experience. The special construction of a Japanese brush ensures ink flows freely from the brush and makes possible the extended brush movements and fluidity that are so pronounced in some styles of calligraphy. Today it is also possible to buy bottles of liquid ink.

Paper

Although the paper used for Asian painting and calligraphy is commonly called "rice paper," no paper is actually made of rice straw. A more accurate term is plant-fiber paper, because most Japanese papers are made from paper mulberry, hemp, and other plant fibers. Most commercially available paper in the West is made of cotton or wood pulp. Japanese

paper for calligraphy can be white, cream, or buff, but Japanese artists also use colored papers and handmade paper decorated with brushwork, powdered silver, mica, and gold flakes. In Japanese, handmade paper is called *washi.*

Name Seals

Carved name seals have been used not only as personal seals and to certify official documents, but also to sign a calligraphic work or a painting. (It is incorrect to call seals "chops," because this is an Indian term. The Japanese term for seal is *hanko.*) The main purpose of a seal is to certify authorship or ownership, but the seals also have aesthetic appeal. An artist may use a brush to sign and date the painting, and then affix a seal near the signature. It is not uncommon for collectors of paintings also to place their name seals on the works they own.

Seal Paste

The red seal paste used with the seals is made of the mineral cinnabar (also called vermillion) and other ingredients. The paste is thick and sticky. To stamp the seal onto the paper, an artist first rubs the bottom of the seal against the seal paste until the seal is covered. Then the artist presses the seal onto the paper and lifts gently. To make a clear impression, artists place something soft, like a folded handkerchief or a paperback book, under the paper they are stamping.

Scrolls

The finished painting on paper or silk is fastened with paste to many layers of paper for serviceability as a scroll that will be rolled and unrolled

Handscroll

Hanging scroll

many times. The paste is water soluble to allow easy remounting of the scroll.

There are two types of scrolls: handscrolls and hanging scrolls. Handscrolls are usually about twelve inches high and may be as long as thirty feet or more.

The paper is fastened on the right-hand side to a thin piece of wood. This is the beginning of the scroll; Japanese writing and images are read from right to left. The scroll is attached on the left-hand side, the end of the scroll, to a wooden roller around which the scroll is rolled for storage. Both hanging and handscrolls can be rolled up and stored in cardboard or wooden boxes.

Only a small portion of the scroll, about an arm span, is meant to be unrolled and examined at a time. Handscrolls are intended to be viewed by an individual or a small group of friends, rather than displayed to a large gathering. After the scroll is viewed, it is rolled up and tied with a ribbon attached to the wooden piece at the beginning of the scroll.

Hanging scrolls may be any size. The painting, which may be on silk or paper, is backed by paper for strength and bordered with strips of silk or cotton. The number of pieces of material used depends on the style of mounting being used. A narrow piece of wood is fastened at the top of the scroll and a roller is fastened at the bottom. You will often see two loose strips of cloth hanging from the wooden support at the top of Japanese paintings. These strips originated with religious paintings or banners. A cord fastened to the wood at the top of the scroll is used for hanging. Hanging scrolls, as the name implies, are hung on the wall for display purposes and the entire scroll is meant to be viewed at the same time. Hanging scrolls may be displayed for several days or weeks, but are changed for different seasons, for special occasions, or to mark the visit of a friend. In most Japanese homes there is an alcove called a *tokonoma*, where a special scroll is displayed.

LESSON 3 | *Reading Paintings, Painting Stories*

three days

OVERVIEW

Paintings often illustrate a narrative that students can learn to "read" just as they would a written story. This lesson focuses on paintings found on screens. Japanese screens serve as room dividers, wind breaks, and decoration. This lesson explores how the function and decoration of screens may be combined to tell a story and create an atmosphere in a room.

Activities

DAY 1

Students will be introduced to the Japanese story "The Bonsai Trees" and will analyze the structure of the tale. They will select one of several Japanese folktales and will identify the scenes involved, the proper sequence of events, turning points in the story, the climax, denouement, and the end.

DAYS 2 AND 3

Students will be introduced to Japanese screens and will interpret the screens' function by examining their form. Working in teams, students will create Japanese-style screens decorated with scenes from the tale they selected in the previous lesson.

MATERIALS

DAY 1

slide projector, slide 6, photocopies of photographs 6a, 6b, and 6c, chalk board or overhead projector, handouts: "The Bonsai Trees," handouts and worksheets on Japanese folktales, markers, and paper for each group

DAYS 2 AND 3

slide projector, slide 6, tape measure, chalk and chalk board or marker and overhead projector, tag board pieces, crayons or markers

DAY 1 DIRECTIONS

Objectives

Given a Japanese story, "The Bonsai Trees" the students will:
■ analyze the story to identify its structure. ■ compare and contrast its theme to those of some folktales.

Anticipatory Set

■ Hand out "The Bonsai Trees." ■ Ask students to read it.

Motivation

- Discuss the facts of the story to ensure the students understand it.

Why was Tsuneyo poor?

He had been a member of the samurai class, but he had been stripped of his land and unjustly banished from court.

Why was Tsuneyo rewarded?

He was still virtuous in spite of injustices and he had sacrificed his valuable trees to provide heat for the guests.

Why is the story named "The Bonsai Trees"?

Bonsai trees are central to the story. Because of the time and care it takes to grow bonsai trees they are greatly valued in Japan, yet Tsuneyo was willing to cut up his trees to provide heat for his guest. The trees symbolize Tsuneyo's unselfish sacrifice.

- The term "bonsai" means "tray planted" and is used to describe the art of training and growing dwarfed trees. The art of bonsai began in China, but the Japanese are the leaders in the art today. The original trees came from stunted specimens collected from the mountains, where their constant battle against the elements had given them interesting twisted shapes. The endurance of these trees was admired and it was thought that they possessed spiritual qualities that would be inherited by their owners. Because of this, for centuries ownership of bonsai was restricted to the upper class. The trees are not naturally dwarf varieties. Growth is controlled by clipping and trimming both branches and roots. Over time, the keeper of the tree uses his or her artistic skills and patience to create a pleasing shape and size for the tree. Trees may live to be over 150 years old.

How many different scenes are there in the story? What are they?

Students may break the story into a smaller or a greater number of scenes.

- The regent's (high official) disguising himself as a monk.
- The monk's approaching Tsuneyo's house on the stormy evening.
- Tsuneyo's and his wife's refusing to let the monk in their house.
- Tsuneyo's wife's begging her husband to help the monk.

- Running out of firewood.
- Burning the bonsai trees.
- Tsuneyo's telling the story of being banished.
- The monk's leaving.
- Tsuneyo's going to the shoguns's court.
- Tsuneyo's recognizing that the regent was the monk who came to his door.
- Tsuneyo's being presented with property and rank.

Are there any turning points in the story?

Tsuneyo's and his wife's refusing to let the monk into their house. Tsuneyo's wife's begging him to allow the monk into the house and Tsuneyo's finally agreeing to do so. The burning of the bonsai trees. Tsuneyo's seeing that the regent was the monk who came to his door.

What is the climax of the story?

The burning of the bonsai trees.

Students may disagree. Have students support their decision.

How would you describe the denouement and end of the story?

Tsuneyo is presented with property and rank to restore him to his rightful position. This provides a happy ending and a moral to the story.

What lessons do you think this tale is supposed to teach?

To sacrifice for guests' comfort, not to bear grudges, to be patient and humble. That hospitality and generosity to strangers is very important.

What part of the story would you choose to illustrate and why?

Development

MATERIALS
slide projector, slide 6, marker and paper, one photocopy of photo 6a, 6b, or 6c for each group

■ Explain that this is a Japanese painting, but don't tell students its title. ■ Divide the students into small groups. ■ Distribute a marker, a piece of paper, and one copy of photograph a, b, or c (details of the screen) to each group. ■ Ask each group to study the photocopy and identify as many things as they can in three minutes. ■ Show slide 6 again. ■ Beginning at the right of the screen ask students to come forward and identify elements, such as: ■ four musicians ■ storyteller ■ calligraphy ■ house ■ winter and ■ mountain scenery ■ gate ■ three puppeteers

■ monk puppet ■ traveling companion puppet ■ wife puppet three bonsai trees ■ pony and barn ■ stage ■ curtain ■ folding screen and samurai armor within the house
(These last two items may be difficult for the students to see and may need to be described by the teacher.)
What story is illustrated in the screen?
It is a story within a story; three puppeteers are performing "The Bonsai Trees."
Which part of the story is being presented on the screen?
The monk's asking for shelter from Tsuneyo's wife.
Is this the part of the story you would have chosen to draw if you were drawing a picture from this tale? Why or why not?

Closure

■ Discuss the power of a single scene from a story to convey the entire tale. This scene is instantly recognizable to Japanese and encapsulates the entire story. The scene is as recognizable to Japanese as a glass slipper on a staircase from "Cinderella," or a spindle with blood from "Sleeping Beauty" is to Americans. So by choosing just one scene the artist is able to create the whole story in the mind of the viewer.
■ Collect the stories. ■ Distribute worksheets and handouts of Japanese folk tales to each student.

MATERIALS
worksheets and handouts of Japanese folktales

Follow-up Activity

LANGUAGE ARTS
You have been commissioned to create a painting based on a Japanese folktale. Read the folktales and select the one you think would make the best subject for a painting. Complete the questions on the worksheet.

Evaluation

group discussion, follow-up worksheets

HANDOUT

The Bonsai Trees

Long ago in Japan, Regent Hojo Tokiyori (1227–1263) gave up his position and disguising himself as a monk, went on a journey throughout Japan with a companion. One terrible, stormy winter afternoon they stopped at a humble home for shelter. The couple who lived in the house, Tsuneyo and his wife, were hesitant to invite the monk into their home because they were very poor and could provide no hospitality. As the pitiful figure of the monk turned to walk into the wintry cold, Tsuneyo's wife felt great compassion for him, and she pled with her husband to call him back and share whatever meager lodging and food they had. All their firewood was gone and as the evening wore on a great chill fell on their house. The storm grew worse, and finally the cold forced Tsuneyo to burn his three prized bonsai trees—pine, plum, and bamboo—to warm the house.

During the evening Tokiyori learned that Tsuneyo had once been a wealthy samurai who had been falsely accused, stripped of his lands, and sent away from his home. Tsuneyo did not bear a grudge against those who had accused him, even though none of his appeals to authorities had been answered. As proof of his loyalty, Tsuneyo showed his guests his suit of armor and rusty weapons.

Not long after the guests had departed, Tsuneyo went to the shogun's court. There he saw that the man he thought was a monk actually was the powerful regent. Tokiyori restored Tsuneyo's property and rank, together with three additional estates, whose names contained the words "pine," "plum," and "bamboo," to reward him for the sacrifice of his three valuable trees.

WORKSHEET: Japanese Folktales

Name Date

You have been commissioned to create a painting based on a Japanese folktale. Read the folktales and select one you think would be the best subject for a painting. Then answer the questions below:

The story I have chosen is

How many different scenes does the story have?

What are they?

Does this folktale have any turning points?

What is the story's climax?

How would you describe the denouement and end of the story?

What lessons do you think this tale is supposed to teach?

HANDOUT
Japanese Folktales

The Crab and the Monkey

A crab with a rice cake met a hungry monkey with a persimmon seed. The monkey offered to trade the seed for the rice cake. They traded, and the monkey ate the rice cake. The crab planted the seed in his garden, and a tree grew and bore fruit. When the fruit was ripe, the crab realized he could not reach it. The monkey offered to pick the persimmons for the crab, but once he was up in the tree, he began throwing them at the crab and cracked his shell. The crab crawled back to his home. When his friends, a water trough, hornet, chestnut, and seaweed heard his story they came to his aid. The hornet stung the monkey, the chestnut got into the fire and exploded in the monkey's face, the seaweed got beneath the monkey's feet and made him fall, and the water trough landed on top of him. The monkey was soundly punished.

Urashima Taro, Fisher Boy

One day, a fisher boy named Urashima saw some children beating a turtle on the beach. Urashima rescued the turtle by bribing the children to leave it alone, and he took the turtle to the seashore and watched him swim away. A few days later, the turtle appeared near Urashima's boat and invited him to the Sea Dragon's kingdom. Urashima accepted and was taken far below the sea where he met the Sea Dragon's beautiful daughter, Princess Oto. He spent several happy months there, but then began to think of his parents and decided to go home. Princess Oto gave him a beautiful gold-leafed lacquer box. She told him it contained a treasure of untold value but that he should never open it because if he did he would never be able to come back to her. When Urashima returned home, he discovered that he had been away for nearly three hundred years. His family was gone and his land had been sold. He was miserable, and he began to think of the wonderful time he had spent in the Sea Dragon's Kingdom, and he remembered the princess. He went to the seashore looking for the turtle, but the turtle was gone. Then Urashima remembered the box the princess had given him. He thought there might be instructions inside the box to help him, and forgetting the princess's warning, he opened the box. Immediately, he began to grow old. Horrified, he realized that the princess had sealed his youth within the box, and now he had lost it. A withered old man stood on the seashore looking out to sea.

Grateful Statues

A hat weaver and his wife wanted some rice cakes for their New Year's meal, so he took five hats into town to sell. All day he tried to sell the hats but was unable to do so. When it began to snow, he started for home. Along the way he passed six statues of Jizo, the protector of children, and he decided to put his unsold hats and even his own hat on the statues to protect them from the snow. He arrived home and told his wife what he had done, and they sat down to a dinner of soup. The next morning, New Year's Day, there was a knock at the door, and when they opened it, there stood a beautiful lady with a large rice cake for them. As she went away in the snow, she was followed by the six statues still wearing the rice-straw hats.

Momotaro, The Peach Boy

An old couple had given up hope of ever having children, when one day the woman found a peach floating in the river. She brought it home and cut it open to find a boy inside. For many years the couple enjoyed great happiness with the boy, whom they named Momotaro, which means Peach Boy. When he was fifteen, he announced that he had enjoyed being with them but that he had to leave them to fight evil ogres living far away. His parents gave him a staff and some dumplings and bid him a safe journey. In a wood some distance from his home, Momotaro met a snarling dog. When Momotaro told the dog that he was not afraid and explained where he was going, the dog decided to join Momotaro because the ogres had killed his son and destroyed his land. Later, Momotaro was joined by a pheasant and a monkey. When they arrived at the ogres' gate at night, the dog chewed through the fence, the monkey and Momotaro waited outside the door, and the pheasant called out, "Ken-ken, ken-ken, ken-ken," a cry that is the warning for an earthquake. The sleepy ogres opened their door and ran into the yard, the monkey threw rocks at them, the dog bit them, and Momotaro beat them.

In the morning, the chief ogre surrendered and gave Momotaro the keys to the ogres' storehouse of treasures. Momotaro returned to his parents with much good fortune to share with them and the entire village.

DAYS 2 AND 3 DIRECTIONS

Objective

Given summaries of Japanese folktales, the students will:

■ create original folding screens.

Anticipatory Set

SKETCHBOOK/JOURNAL WRITING

Now that you have selected your favorite story for homework and analyzed its structure, explain what part of the story you would choose to illustrate and why.

■ While students are completing the anticipatory set, collect the folktale worksheet. ■ Plan the working groups according to the tales the students have chosen.

MATERIALS

slide projector, slide 6, tape measure

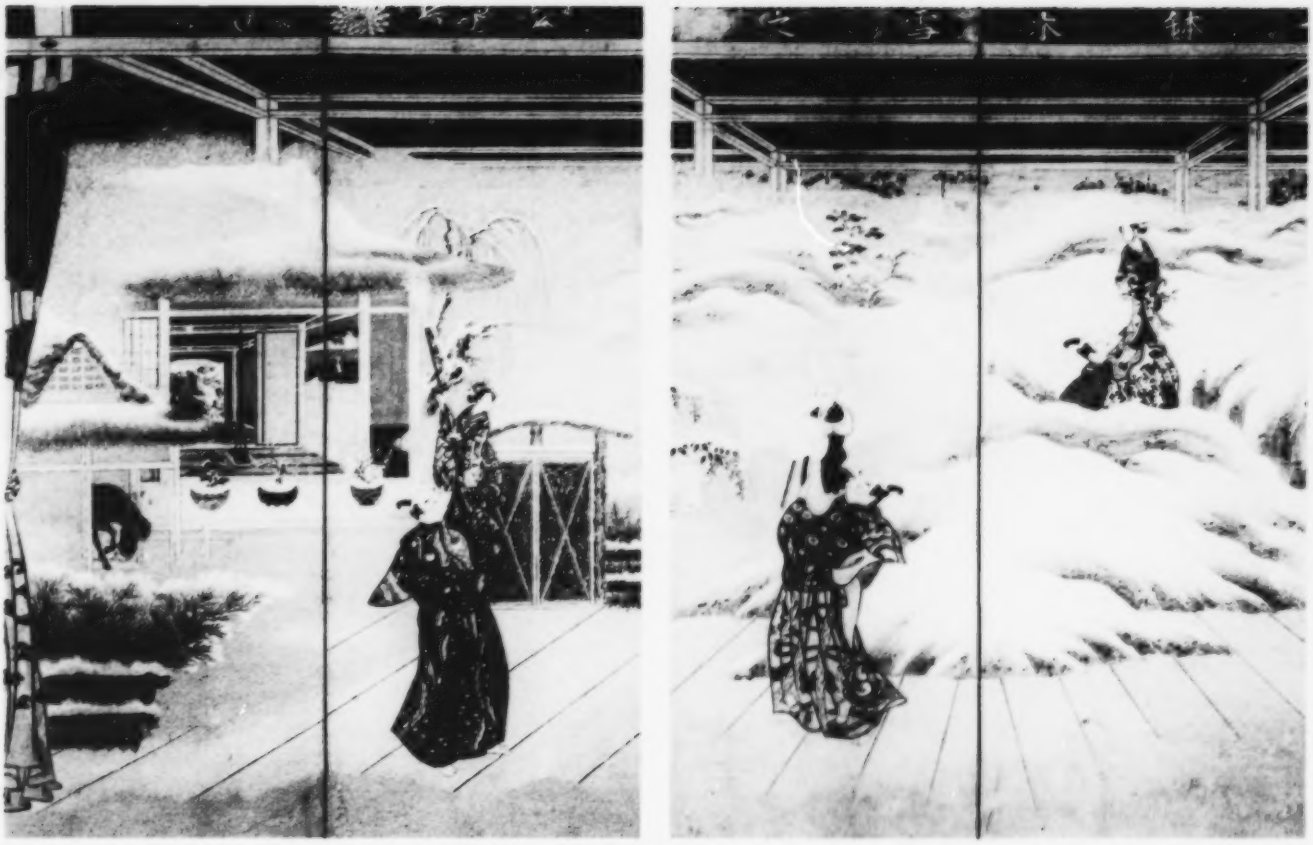
Motivation

■ Display slide 6. ■ Explain that this image is not merely a painting but a folding screen. ■ Explain that the real screen in the Freer Gallery of Art is about 5'x12'. ■ Call on students to measure a space 5'x12' with the tape measure.

How might a folding screen 5' x 12' be used in a house?

As a room divider, for decoration, or both. Point out that heavy furniture

A screen is in the interior of the house. Detail from *Girl Preparing Ink*. Handscroll by Nishikawa Sukenobu (Japanese; 1671–1751), color, black, and gold on silk. Museum accession number 99.19, 35 cm H x 65.7 cm W (13 11/16" x 25 7/8")



Details from the left and right of *The Puppet Show*

is not used in traditional Japanese homes and that the main room usually serves as the living, eating, and sleeping room, so a folding screen could be useful in dividing the area.

What part of the screen would be eye level when standing?

The roof of the theater. Point out that in traditional Japanese homes people sit on the floor.

What part of the screen would be eye level when sitting?

The pony and the calligraphy above the storyteller's head.

What effect might that have on a visitor?

It might make him feel as if he is attending or participating in the puppet show.

Why do you think the artist chose to show the part of the story in which Tsuneyo invites the monk into his home?

This is the starting point of the story. It expresses Tsuneyo's hospitality

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and generosity. Guests entering the home where the screen was displayed would understand that the screen's owner was also hospitable.

■ Turn off the projector.

If you were to decorate a screen with part of the story you selected for homework, would you chose to illustrate one or many scenes?
How would you arrange several events on a screen?
Chronologically. Because this is a Japanese screen the story should progress from right to left.
If you were to work as a group with the other students who selected the same story as you for homework, how would you share the work?
Each person might decorate one panel or each person might take one subject to complete such as people, trees, background, or the printing of words. Think about the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

MATERIALS
worksheets, tag board

Development

■ Divide the students into groups based on the story they selected for homework. ■ Distribute a worksheet to each group. The worksheets guide students in thinking through the stages involved in decorating a screen before they begin working on the screen itself. ■ Students will complete progress worksheets and get approval from the teacher before beginning work on their screens. ■ Hand out tag board.

Closure

Have each group present to the class the title and part(s) of the folktale they will be depicting. ■ Ask them to explain why they made their selections. ■ Review the reason for the selection of the scene shown in the screen *The Puppet Show* and compare it with their reasons for selecting scenes.

Follow-up Activities

ART AND LANGUAGE ARTS

■ Complete the screens. ■ Ask students to think what information other students will need to know to appreciate the screens. ■ Visit the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C. or your local museum's Japanese collection to view other Japanese screens. ■ Have students write labels for the screens, taking these points into consideration. ■ Display the screens and labels for the rest of the school.

■ Ask students to evaluate their organization for constructing the screens.

LANGUAGE ARTS

■ Compare and contrast the themes of the folktales within the lesson with those of other stories.

Evaluation

worksheet, class discussion, screens, follow-up projects

50

WORKSHEET: Making a Screen

Names of group members

Title of the folktale

Circle the correct answer below:

Our screen will show: one scene several scenes

Will there be any calligraphy on you screen? Yes No

What will the calligraphy say?

Describe the entire scene or sketch it on the back of this worksheet.

Explain why you selected this scene or these scenes

What would be at eye level if someone were standing and looking at a full-sized model of your screen?

What would be at eye level if someone were sitting and looking at a full-sized model of your screen?

Explain how you will divide the work among your group members.

Name will do because

Name will do because

Name will do because

Name will do because

Name will do because

LESSON 3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Samurai

The samurai began as soldiers who defended the princely landholders, known as *daimyo* (great names) and the emperor in the tenth century. From boyhood the samurai were trained in the martial arts and toughened through fasting and barefoot marches. They had a strong ethical code, known as *bushido*, which demanded obedience, loyalty, honor, and sacrifice. They preferred death to capture or retreat and practiced *seppuku*, a ritualistic suicide by knife. Over the years they gained power and privileges, becoming an easily recognized class because they wore two swords and a distinctive headdress. *Bushido* became the code of the country.

An illustrated samurai history (including a note about women samurai), stories, and directions for making a cardboard samurai breastplate can be found in the magazine *Calliope*, Volume 3, January/February 1993, available from Calliope, 7 School Street, Peterborough, NH 03458. Phone (603) 924–7209.

Shogun

Beginning in 1192 the greatest warriors were known as shogun, which means "great general." The shogun was appointed by the emperor. Gradually the emperors became more and more secluded and the shogun took civil power over the daimyo, or regional warrior-rulers. In 1871, the last shogun resigned and the daimyo returned their lands to the emperor.

CONCLUDING THE UNIT

After the lessons, repeat Circle of Knowledge, the brainstorming activity with which the students began the unit. This will demonstrate to the students how much they have learned.

Art

Japanese art and culture has influenced many artists. Have students look at the work of an artist whose work reflects an awareness of Japanese art and ask students to identify the Japanese influences.

One good example is James McNeill Whistler's *Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen*, in the Freer Gallery of Art. It shows a woman dressed in a kimono, seated before a screen. *The Four Sylvan Sounds* by Thomas Wilmer Dewing, also in the Freer, was inspired by Japanese screens. Compare these with *October Morning, Deerfield*, the American painting used Lesson 1. Discuss the difference between a work of art that is trying to copy another work of art and a work that is inspired by the art. Have students create their own artwork that is inspired by Japanese art.

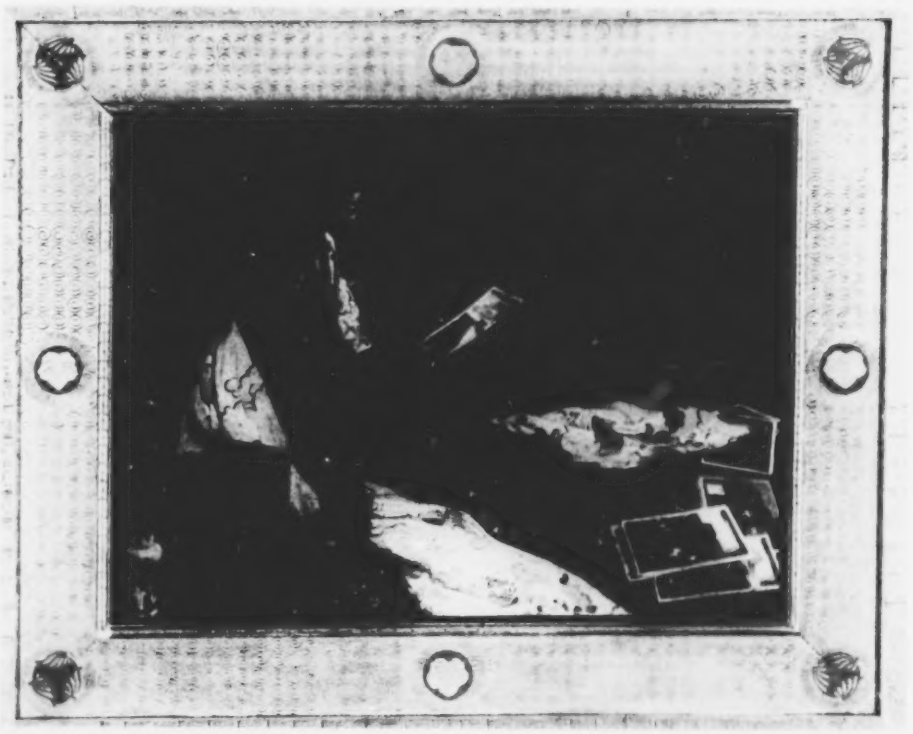
Language Arts

Display the prints of the artworks used within the unit and have each student select the one they think best represents what they have learned about Japanese painting and culture. Group the students according to their choices and have them prepare reasons that defend their choices.

Art and Language Arts

Mount an exhibition at your school of the prints of the art works used within this unit and the pieces created by the students. In preparation for the exhibition, discuss which aspects of Japanese art have influenced the students' work. Have students write labels for the exhibition. Make invitations in scroll form for the exhibition.

(right) *Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen* by James McNeill Whistler (American, 1834–1903), 1864. Oil on panel. Museum accession number 04.75, 50.1 cm h x 68.5 cm w (19 5/8" x 27")



(below) *Four Sylvan Sounds* by Thomas Wilmer Dewing (American, 1851–1938), 1896–97. Oil on panel. Museum accession number 06.72 and 06.73, 175.7 cm H x 153 cm W (19 7/8" x 27")

RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND THEIR SOURCES

Baker, Joan Stanley. *Japanese Art.* New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991.
PUBLISHER: Thames and Hudson Inc., 500 5th Avenue, NY, NY 10110, (212) 354-3763, (800) 233-4830, FAX: (212) 398-1252

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